

Message Text

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17

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SUBJECT: NDP RE-UNITES IN WAKE KIM OK SON AFFAIR BUT HITS NEW
DEPTH

REF:

SEOUL 7975 (DTG P 130401Z OCT 75)

SEOUL 8012 (DTG PR 140904Z OCT 75)

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SEOUL 8124 (DTG 150920Z OCT 75)

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING LENGTHY INTERNAL SQUABBLE IN
WAKE KIM OK SON AFFAIR, NDP HAS REUNITED AND AGREED TO
RETURN TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION. HOWEVER, INTERNAL
PARTY WOUNDS ARE DEEPER AND PARTY PRESTIGE IS LOWER
THAN EVER. END SUMMARY.

1. IN COURSE COMPLEX SERIES INTRA-PARTY MEETINGS

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OCTOBER 18-20 NDP MANAGED TO WORK OUT COMPROMISE

INVOLVING RESIGNATION OF SEVERAL PARTY LEADERS FROM PARTY POSTS AND AGREEMENT BY DISSIDENT PARTY MEMBERS THAT THEY WILL RETURN ALONG WITH REST OF PARTY TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION OCTOBER 23 OR AT LATEST OCTOBER 27-28.

2. PRIME ELEMENT OF COMPROMISE WAS RESIGNATION OF MODERATE NDP FLOOR LEADER, KIM HYONG-IL, PARTY POLICY COUNSEL CHAIRMAN, AND NDP SECRETARY GENERAL OCTOBER 21. IN EXCHANGE FOR RESIGNATIONS OF THESE KIM YONG SAM SUPPORTERS, NON MAIN-STREAM MEMBERS OF PARTY AGREED TO SEASE THEIR RECALCITRANT WAYS, TO GO BACK TO WORK, AND TO CEASE TRYING TO FORCE NDP PRESIDENT KIM YONG SAM'S RESIGNATION WHICH THEY HAD BEEN AFTER EVER SINCE OUSTER OF MS. KIM OK SON. AS OF OCTOBER 21 ONLY TWO NDP MEMBERS, YI TAEK TONG AND PAK YONG NOK, WERE STILL INSISTING ON KIM YONG-SAM'S RESIGNATION BUT COMMON VIEW IS THEY TOO WILL CAPITULATE TO GENERAL TREND OR SIMPLY BE LEFT IN ISOLATED POSITION WHEN OTHERS RETURN TO ASSEMBLY.

3. COMPROMISE CAME ABOUT FOLLOWING SEVERAL DAYS OF NDP INTERNAL MANEUVERING. KIM OK SON'S ATTACK ON PRESIDENT PAK ON ASSEMBLY FLOOR OCTOBER 8, WHICH EXPRESSED SENTIMENT OF NUMBER OF PARTY MEMBERS, ALTHOUGH BY NO MEANS ALL HAD BEEN WIDELY INTERPRETED BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ASSEMBLY NOT ONLY AS ATTACK ON PRESIDENT BUT AS CHALLENGE TO KIM YONG SAM TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AS TRUE OPPOSITIONIST. AS CONSEQUENCE MANY NDP MEMBERS AND PARTY SUPPORTERS LOOKED FOR STRONG ACTION FROM KIM YONG SAM ON KIM OK SON'S BEHALF. INSTEAD, IN DAYS FOLLOWING MS. KIM'S SPEECH PARTY LEADER KIM ADOPTED SILENT PUBLIC POSTURE WHILE WORKING BEHIND SCENES WITH BLUE HOUSE FOR COMPROMISE WHICH TOOK FORM OF ACCEPTANCE BY GOVERNMENT OF MS. KIM'S RESIGNATION FROM ASSEMBLY IN PLACE OF HER EVICTION, GOVERNMENT PROMISE NOT TO PROSECUTE MS. KIM, AND PROMISE IN TURN BY NDP LEADER TO BRING HIS PARTY BACK TO THE ASSEMBLY HALLS.

4. PERCEIVING WEAKNESS IN THIS POSITION SOME NDP LEADERS,

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CHIEFLY ASSEMBLY VICE SPEAKER YI CHOL SUNG, GRABBED OPPORTUNITY TO ATTACK KIM YONG SAM FORNRERSONAL ADVANTAGE. OTHERS IN NDP WENT ALONG BELIEVING KIM SHOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE STRONGER STAND IN EFFORT SHORE-UP PARTY'S WANING CREDITABILITY. TO FORCE KIM INTO DRAMATIC SHOW OF OPPOSITION AND POSSIBLY EVEN RESIGNATION HIMSELF, MAJORITY WITHIN PARTY RESISTED KIM'S EFFORTS TO RETURN PARTY TO ASSEMBLY AS HE HAD PRIVATELY PROMISED

GOVERNMENT HE WOULD DO. RESISTANCE CONTINUED EVEN AFTER KIM FINALLY MADE STRONG PRESS STATEMENT ON OCTOBER 17 ATTACKING GOVERNMENT FOR ITS HANDLING OF KIM OK SON AFFAIR. IT TOOK FURTHER COMZESSION OF SACRIFICIAL RESIGNATION OF FLOOR LEADER KIM HYONG IL, AND OTHER PARTY LEADERS TO PROVIDE DISSIDENTS WITH FACE SAVING AVENUE TOWARD PARTY COMPROMISE AND RETURN TO ASSEMBLY.

5. WHILE PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION IN RECENT DAYS HAS FOCUSSED LARGELY ON INTERNAL NDP TUSSE, WINNER ONCE AGAIN IN SHORT TERM POLITICAL SENSE HAS BEEN NEITHER OPPOSITION PARTY FACTION, BUT GOVERNMENT. GOVERNMENT HAS CIRCUMSCRIBED PERSONAL ATTACKS ON PRESIDENT AND DISCUSSION THREATENING NATIONAL SECURITY WITHIN ASSEMBLY WALLS, EFFECTIVELY GOTTEN RID OF AN ERRING MEMBER, REDUCED THE NDP TO AN AVEN LOWER STATE OF INTERNAL BICKERING EVOKING MORE PUBLIC RIDICULE THAN USUAL, AND INDUCED FURTHER UNDERMINING OF KIM YONG SAM'S POSITION AS PARTY LEADER. MOREOVER, BECAUSE PUBLIC ATTENTION HAS FOCUSSED ON THE NDP'S TROUBLES GOVERNMENT SIDE HAS ESCAPED RELATIVELY UNSCATHED IN POLITICAL TERMS DESPITE TOUGHNESS OF ITS ORIGINAL ACTION AGAINST KIM OK SON. OLY "COSTS" TO GOVERNMENT WERE DECISION TO ALLOW MS. KIN TO RESIGN FROM ASSEMBLY RATHER THAN BE EVICTED AND CAREFULLY COUCHED GOVERNMENT PROMISE MADE TO KIM YONG SAM THAT MS. KIM WOULD NOT BE PROSECUTED IN COURTS IF SHE AVOIDED FURTHER TROUBLE. HOWEVER, GIVEN INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS AND DIFFICULTY GETING AROUND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IMMUNITY RULE, GOVERNMENT SELF RESTRAINT ON THESE QUESTIONS WAS UNDOUBTEDLY IN ITS OWN INTEREST.

6. WITH MS. KIM'S CASE NOW HISTORY AND NDP RETURN AGREED, ASSEMBLY WILL BEGIN TO CONSIDER BUDGET IN COMMITTEE SESSIONS. CONFIDENTIAL

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IN ACCORD TEMPORARILY ABORTED PLANS TO FOCUS MORE ON ISSUES DURING THIS SESSION, NDP HOPES TO EXPLOIT CHIEF POPULAR CONCERN THESE DAYS, HIGH TAXES, BY SEEKING BUDGET CUTS AND INCREASE IN WAGE LEVEL ENTITLED TO TAX EXEMPTION. THIS MOVE WILL BE POPULAR, GOVERNMENT MAY WELL BE FORCED TO GIVE SOME GROUND, AND NDP MAY REGAIN SOME POLITICAL CREDIBILITY. IT WILL HARDLY BE ENOUGH HOWEVER, TO RECOUP NDP'S GROWING DEFICIT POLITICAL POSITION. FOR IN LAST ANALYSIS, PLACED AS SO OFTEN IN PAST IN SITUATION WHERE THEY COULD NOT EFFECTIVELY REACT AGAINST GOVERNMENT SHORT OF COMMITTING POLITICAL SUICIDE, NDP ASSEMBLY MEMBERS HAVE CONFIRMEED MORE CONVINCINGLY THAN EVER THAT ONLY INTERESTS THEY CAN EFFECTIVELY SERVE ARE THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL ONES. SNEIDER

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